

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

## A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 45.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

### KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

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"*A Faire Damzell*," etc., etc.

#### CHAPTER XII. A STRONG ATTRACTION.

HOEL FENNER found great difficulty in getting rid of Miss Heaton after lunch on the Saturday when, quite against his better judgement, he had run down from town to Rushbrook. To do Clara Heaton justice, she had not the least idea or intention of getting married; her work was to prevent her brother from committing such folly, and this work allowed no rival object; but, on the other hand, Miss Heaton thought it her duty to find out the religious position of any young man she might ask to the Vicarage. She had faint notions that the glorious work of converting a young masculine soul must rank very high indeed, when the reckoning came; but by converting, Miss Heaton meant nothing at all like what is generally understood by that word. She considered the Salvation Army very low, and, being outwardly High Church, would not have asked any one if they were saved. When analysed, Miss Heaton's feeling might have been called, by some ill-natured persons, one of mere curiosity. She wanted to know exactly what were the religious opinions of her visitor. If they agreed with hers, then she merely abused all the other Church parties; if the opinions did not harmonise with hers, then she tried to show the visitor how very mistaken he was. It must be added, however, that Miss Heaton never held these conversations before Herbert; even for her it was difficult to be severe upon the religion of

others in his presence, because Herbert Heaton seemed so much the embodiment of charity that, without his making any objections, everything that was not seasoned with the greatest of gifts fell flat.

Miss Heaton found Mr. Fenner strangely unwilling to talk about his religious feelings, even though Herbert had left them alone to go to a clerical meeting at Greystone; and, stranger still, as soon as he politely could, Hoel Fenner said he had business with Mr. Kestell, and disappeared. Miss Heaton settled that she would find out Mr. Fenner's spiritual state on Sunday evening, when Herbert went off to a cottage service in a lonely hamlet some two miles away.

"From his answers to me, now, I very much fear Mr. Fenner is a Freethinker," said Clara Heaton, preparing to take out some beef-tea to a sick woman, "and, if so, I think I can soon show him how extremely wrong he is."

Hoel never gave his hostess another thought when he was once out upon the moor. He very much admired Herbert Heaton for being a man who, as far as he could find out, lived up to his belief, and who was a shepherd in deed as well as in name; but as for his sister, "Good heavens!" he exclaimed, "why do such women exist? It must be to make religion more difficult to believe in."

Once with his back to the Vicarage, Hoel Fenner gazed down upon Rushbrook House with a strange, new feeling of admiration. The great moor, with its yellow paths and its delicious scent of heather and gorse, filled him with a new life of feeling. He could see the gray house where she lived peeping out from a bower of tree-tops, as if stretching its neck to see above the oaks and beeches what was taking

place on the open moor. Hoel looked about him to try and find the place where he had met Elva; but he was not near enough to it. Perhaps she would be walking or sketching to-day on this moor; why not look for her? On the left of him was a copse of larch, and oak, and pine, which wandered irregularly down between two hills. Here the murmur of the wind seemed less harsh than in the plantation where only firs were found. To Hoel—at this moment emptied of himself, because Nature was so full of other thoughts and impressed them upon him, and because love had found a weak place in his armour—it appeared possible to him to forget himself in loving another. He wondered why he had never felt like this before; why he had spurned the idea of love; why he had hesitated and reasoned when, at last, he had seen the only woman who had appeared to him to rise out of a crowd, and, not by her special beauty or her special talent, but by an irresistible charm, to be to him the embodiment of woman.

"I have been a fool to argue about it. I fancied I was proof against all the fascinations of women; and now I find that I can't forget this girl who had no wish to fascinate me."

At this moment Jesse Vicary's affairs faded from his mind as if they were non-existent. All he wanted was to see Elva again, and to find out whether this new feeling would leave him as suddenly as it had attacked him.

Elva was sitting on the garden-seat with a book in her hands when she heard the click of the gate; and, to her surprise, she saw Hoel Fenner approaching her. She had time to note once more every line of his handsome face, and to think to herself that certainly she had never seen such a handsome man, and such a perfect gentleman. Even though the thought of the criticism at once rose to her mind, it was not without a feeling of pleasure that she rose from the seat and came forward to greet him.

"How strange you should come to Rushbrook to-day!" said Elva, so naturally that Hoel Fenner felt she was perfectly unconscious of his motive. He had come down with no anxiety as to the result; but her reception of him made him feel almost as if the former self-possessed Hoel were not the same as the present Hoel who was trying to appear natural.

"I—I dare say you are surprised to see

me again so soon, Miss Kestell. I have come—partly on business. You remember my telling you about your father's protégé, Jesse Vicary? Well, I have ventured to come on his behalf. I wished to speak to Mr. Kestell about his future."

Hoel sat down on a chair which he placed a little on one side of Elva, so that he could watch her face. He seemed to see a new beauty in it. The expression seemed deepened, and less that of a wilful girl, and the idea seized him that perhaps Elva had a lover, and that he was not the first, and would have come down here in vain. This idea at once enhanced the value of the prize, for Hoel was a man who hated failure.

"Then you have come at a good time. Jesse Vicary is at the farm; but papa is, I am sorry to say, not at home to-day. He is going to dine with a gentleman at Greytone on business. I suppose you will stay till Monday; and if you don't mind leaving Mr. Heaton to-morrow evening, I know papa will be glad to see you. Come and dine with us."

Elva had forgotten that she did not mean Hoel to come and break bread in Rushbrook House, for some of her charm lay in that quick change of feeling which made it impossible to be sure how she would act.

"Thank you," he said; and then there was a pause, a pause which Hoel knew at any other time he would not have allowed in a conversation; but he was learning that he could fail in small talk.

"I am glad you can leave your work," said Elva, her dark grey eyes suddenly flashing out a little defiant light. "I thought critics always read the stupid novels on Sunday, instead of going to church."

Hoel could not help smiling.

"You do not agree that the better the day the better the deed?"

"You know I disapprove of 'the deed;' or, rather, I dare say you have forgotten all about my thoughts on the subject."

"Indeed I have not. Perhaps you will not believe me if I say that I came here partly to be taught some more critical duties."

"You are saying this only as a compliment," said Elva, impatiently. "You forget that I am a constant reader of the 'Review' in which you write."

"Then you have perhaps read what I said of Hudson's book on 'The Laws That Govern Actions.'"

"Yes," said Elva, thoughtfully, leaning her cheek on her hand; "but I noticed that you did not say much about suffering. I have often remembered what you said to me about it—that one could not write without having understood that word in some practical way."

Hoel remembered perfectly; but he had the power of saying many things well, which things, however, he never cared to put into practice. He was like Benvenuto Cellini, who fancied he saw a resplendent light hovering over his shadow. If Hoel thought of possible pain, he also fancied he would be able to have a resplendent light over it.

"I was, however," he rejoined, "much interested in that chapter of it which dealt of what men have accomplished when actuated by motives of despair."

Elva suddenly looked up, and one of her bright smiles flashed out amusement, so that Hoel felt a little nettled by it. It was just that touch in her of original thought which he admired, at the same time that he was a little afraid of its being used against himself. It seemed that this country girl might just find out that portion of him which was not entirely sincere. Hoel did not put this into words, he only felt it; but it made him more eager to make Elva acknowledge his superiority. The intricate motives which guide the actions of men and women are sometimes fathomed, as if by inspiration, by those of the opposite sex; and Elva had by chance done this now.

"I can't imagine your feeling despair about anything," she said, taking up the book she had been reading, and which she had put down. "I am sure you would criticise your despair away if you ever had it."

"Then you disbelieve in anything spontaneous in me? How can I make you alter your opinion?"

Elva laughed now; it was the laugh of a bright, joyous woman on the threshold of a happy life. She was not going to tell her secret, even if she forgave Hoel; and something in him was beginning to attract her powerfully; it was the charm which had attracted many other persons, and which gave Hoel so many friends.

"Don't try to, because, if you knew me, you would understand that I never care to analyse opinions. A woman somehow guesses at truth without analysing, as you clever men are accustomed to do. We like change, I suppose, and not to go always along the same lines."

"And do you like change so much?"

"Yes, I do. I like being honest, though I suppose I shall shock you. I like change in all that is around me, and yet I like the same things to be always about me. Is that a contradiction? Amice says she is never sure what I shall like or dislike, and yet she knows me better than any one else. But how horrid to talk about oneself! Don't you think it is never oneself one talks about, but a person one has set up before one and called oneself? To talk about oneself is to talk about a definite person; and, in reality, I don't know myself at all; I can't be sure of what I shall do next, even when I have settled it definitely."

Elva rose up from her seat and laughed again. Hoel looked at her now in surprise. Yes, she was original; there was nothing about her of the silly woman, which personage could never have appealed to him, and yet there was a strange uncertainty which took one continually by surprise.

"You only experience what most of us do feel some time or other; except—yes, when we have a very definite object in view, and then we do not allow that changeable self its way; we turn neither to the right hand nor the left. But that variable-ness of mind is always present in poetic natures. I fancy you must admire poetry. Your volume looks like a poet."

"Yes, I love poetry. It seems to me almost like wandering on our moors. This is Keats; do you like him?"

"A miniature painter in very bright colours; but he died too young to give us his full maturity of thought."

"Maturity of thought!" said Elva, impatiently, "that would not have been like this, it would have killed the best in him. He would have framed his mind after the pattern of critics, and we should have had a Keats who painted by rule."

Elva sat down, and turning over the pages of her little volume, she said:

"Do you know this, Mr. Fenner? What beauty would maturity have added to it?"

"Season of mist and mellow fruitfulness."

And she repeated half-a-dozen lines of this poem.

Hoel hardly heard the words, the music of the rich, clear voice was enough enchantment to a man in love. But was he in love? "Yes, certainly," he said, in answer to this question. "No woman has ever before made me feel content to sit by her and listen to her."

Elva did not wait for any remark when she had done; perhaps she feared that Hoel would criticise something she loved, and happily Amice appeared at this moment, and Hoel found himself looking, with great interest, at Elva's sister for the first time. Neither was he to escape the strange feeling of having before him a being not fitted for common humanity, which, on the whole, rejects mystery as an insult to its understanding.

Elva went to meet her sister, and Hoel followed; and when he shook hands and noted the marble-like face and the lifeless touch of the hand, he wondered how two sisters could be so unlike each other. The one, beautiful, with health, life, colour, and bright eyes flashing out intelligence like jewels in darkness; the other, cold as clay, unapproachable as a spirit form; and yet Elva seemed quite unconscious of the effect her sister must have on strangers.

"You must come in to tea," said Elva, thinking more that she would like Amice to see this noted, clever man than of any conscious feeling herself about him. "But come and stand a moment on our bridge, Mr. Fenner. We think the view from here is perfect, and the Pool is always giving us all new thoughts. Papa comes here every day after dinner; it's a habit. And I have seen you, Amice, lean over the parapet for ten minutes without moving. Generally, however, my sister is to be found in dirty cottages."

"That is quite a fashionable taste," said Hoel; but feeling at once it was a foolish speech to this girl, for she turned her large, blue eyes upon him—eyes which he fancied he had never seen before, and which at once gave him a dislike of blue eyes. He could not account for the repellent force that seized him.

"I believe it is; but here we are quite away from the effect of fashion, I hope. I like poor people, so I do not take any credit for going to see them."

"That is not your taste, I think, Miss Kestell?"

Hoel turned from one sister to the other as one would turn away from a corpse to a beautiful woman standing near by.

"No; I don't like dirt and poor people. I am sorry for them; but one can be sorry without hearing all about their pains and aches." They paused on the bridge. "You do admire this, don't you? Look, the reflections cheat us with a double reality—and that filmy shadow of the

filmy silver birches. Keats could have described it; no one else."

"It is the little bit of blue sky reflected in the midst of it which makes it so lovely," said Amice, as if to herself, "an unknown height in an unknown depth."

Elva put her arm in her sister's, and Hoel felt jealous of this mutual sympathy.

"It is Amice who is the true poet, Mr. Fenner; but she persists in hiding all her talents! There is one special thing about poets—I am not sure whether it most makes or mars them—which is, that unhappiness always seems to pursue them even when they are happy: I mean real poets, those who have given us something inspired."

"They cannot forget that they are surrounded by themselves, or, perhaps, they do not wish to forget it; but, after all, they only feel much, what, I suppose, we feel a little."

"Keats does not say that," said Amice, suddenly.

"And can I bid these joys farewell?  
Yes. I must pass them for a nobler life,  
Where I may find the agonies, the strife  
Of human hearts."

But Elva's mood changed.

"Let us come in to tea," she said, quickly; "mamma will be expecting us."

At this moment a figure appeared by the Pool; and, without exactly meaning it, the three paused to see who it was. Hoel was close by the gate of Rushwood House, and Elva was by his side. Only Amice had walked a few steps up the drive.

It was Walter Akister who passed; and Hoel at once noticed the deep blush that overspread Elva's face, the dark, surly look on the face of Mr. Akister, and the perfect silence in which his bow was received.

The whole scene took but a minute, and then he was out of sight; but for Hoel it was enough. Elva became at once more precious in his eyes; for there are few men who do not value a woman more if she is coveted by another. For Love is a highly-polished diamond with many facets, and in each a different picture may be reflected.

Hoel knew very well that he was falling, nay, had fallen in love. He could even study the phase in all its bearings. He was not deceived in himself; but that was his way, and not the less real because he had the power of arguing over each step of the way he was taking.

He spent a delightful hour in the pretty



drawing-room where everything breathed of comfort and refinement; but as Mrs. Kestell found herself well enough to come in and be entertained by him, there was no more private conversation. He walked home in the falling light across the moor, and up to the Vicarage, convinced that Elva was worthy of being Mrs. Hoel Fenner. He even acknowledged her superiority over himself in that indescribable original force which attracted him in man or woman, though at the same time he knew that, as far as the outward eye could see, he was infinitely her superior. He felt, too, that he was like a beautiful building raised by skill and patient labour, whilst she was one of the grottoes which Nature had reared for herself, in order, as it seems, to laugh man's effort to scorn.

### THE FORTH BRIDGE.

THE close of the year 1889 will be memorable for the completion of one of the most wonderful and daring engineering achievements in the history of human effort. The occasion, therefore, is meet, in which to give some account of this exploit.

Merely to look at, the Forth Bridge is a wonder, with its masses of ironwork towering to what seems an awful height by contrast with the surrounding level of land and sea, and stretching its great arm to an apparently limitless distance over the surging waters. Certainly it is one of the most impressive sights in the world, as mechanical devices go; and, as a bridge, it has the longest span, the greatest weight, and the greatest strength of any yet constructed. And, distinctively, it is the largest cantilever construction ever attempted. Perhaps, to the untutored eye, the greatest wonder about it is how it manages to hold together at all, and what is the mystery of its strength.

It is our purpose to do something to remove this mystery, and to explain, in language suited to non-experts, the structure of the bridge, which is to form the link in the great north traffic by way of Edinburgh.

Heretofore, such of that traffic as passed over the system of the North British Railway Company has had to be conveyed across the Forth—from Granton, a few miles below Edinburgh, to Burntisland, on the Fife shore—by means of huge steam-ferries, worked at enormous expense. Hereafter, passengers and goods will never

leave the carriages, but, running on from Edinburgh to Queensferry, will be whirled across the new bridge in a few minutes, and thence over the Fife lines to any part of the railway system of the north of Scotland.

The idea of a bridge across the Firth of Forth is not a new one, and, long before railways were thought of, there was one projected. This, and all subsequent proposals, naturally centred at Queensferry, because the Forth there is at its narrowest, and, also, because in mid-channel there is a rocky island called Inchgarvie, which seems placed there on purpose to support a central pier. Then the banks, too, on each side are steeper than at other points, and thus provide better bases for working from. But, while comparatively steep, these banks do not exceed one hundred and fifty feet or so above the level of the sea which has to be traversed.

Some eighty years ago there was even a project for a suspension bridge across, almost on the very line of the present one; but nothing came of it.

About twenty years ago there was a proposal to run immense ferry-steamers across here, each steamer to be capable of carrying an entire passenger train. A beginning was actually made to build the necessary piers on the Queensferry side; but the work was discontinued when, in 1873, the Forth Bridge Company was formed, and obtained an Act of Parliament to build a bridge across the Forth, on the plans of Sir Thomas Bouch.

This bridge was to have been on the suspension principle, and was estimated to cost only about one-half of what the present structure will cost. But, before any but preliminary work was done, the collapse of the Tay Bridge, in 1879, with the attendant awful loss of life, caused the abandonment of Sir Thomas Bouch's scheme. There are still many engineers who are of opinion that it would have been perfectly safe; but the Tay Bridge catastrophe gave both experts and non-experts a fright.

After a pause, in 1880, the three great railway companies interested in the north traffic—to wit, the North Eastern, the Midland, and the Great Northern—laid their heads together, along with the North British, to consider what was best to be done. A committee of specialists was appointed to examine plans and deliberate on the line of action, and these in 1881 finally recommended the construction of a

steel bridge on the "Cantilever and Central Girder" system, according to a plan designed jointly by Sir John Fowler and Mr. Benjamin Baker. Thereupon the Forth Bridge Company adopted this plan, appointed these two gentlemen their engineers, obtained another Act of Parliament to empower them to proceed, and secured the financial assistance and guarantees of the railway companies we have named. Then tenders were invited for the construction, and a contract concluded, in December, 1882, with the firm of Tancred, Arrol, and Company, for the entire execution of the whole work. It was Mr. Arrol, of this firm, who built the new and successful Tay Bridge; and it was his partner, Mr. Phillips, who built Westminster, Charing Cross, and Cannon Street Bridges.

Such, in brief, is the history of the scheme, until the actual bridging of the Firth of Forth began in 1883.

It is now necessary to say something of the cantilever principle, which is the foundation of the design of Sir John Fowler and Mr. Baker. This is not, of course, the place for scientific definition and technical detail, so we may say in plain terms that a cantilever is simply a bracket. Everybody is familiar with a suspension bridge, and has some sort of general idea of how the structure is suspended upon chains, which are secured over high pillars at each end. The cantilever, however, is merely a bracket built out from the shore by welding iron beam on to beam until it meets a similar bracket sent out from the opposite side. The homely illustration has been used, and may be here repeated, that it is like two men on opposite sides of a stream stretching out their arms to join hands, and using a stick to complete the connection.

In the case of the Forth Bridge, there are two sets of these brackets. One arm extends from Queensferry to meet in mid-channel a fellow sent out from Inchgarvie; another arm goes out from the other side of Inchgarvie to meet one extended from the Fife shore. These two separate spans—they are not arches—are each twice the width of the widest arch of Blackfriars Bridge.

In general appearance, the Forth Bridge is that of three huge towers, about the height of St. Paul's, each with a bracket projecting from both sides.

These brackets, or cantilevers, do not rest upon the shore, but are connected with

the respective shores by a viaduct supported on arches. The peculiarity of the Forth brackets is, that they are double—that is, supported from both top and bottom—and that they are united in the middle by girders. This peculiarity is not claimed as original, but it has certainly never before been applied to spans of seventeen hundred feet.

It is probable that the Forth Bridge could never have been constructed, but for Sir Henry Bessemer's great discovery of cheapening steel. This, with the later improvements of other inventors, has provided a material with which no other could have compared, or could have been provided so economically. The virtues of "mild steel" are in its toughness, rigidity, and strength, combined with a minimum of weight. It has been employed in cantilever bridges in America, but never before, we believe, in this country.

The Niagara river is now crossed by a bridge with two cantilevers, and a span of four hundred and seventy feet; and at New York there is one projected, since the assured success of the Forth Bridge, of one with a span of two thousand eight hundred feet. Some persons have even dreamed that the principle may be yet applied to bridge the Channel which divides England from France.

At the Forth Bridge there are stone arches supporting the viaduct on the dry land at either end, and the portion which actually traverses the water is in three sections. Some seven hundred feet from the shore at each end, piers have been erected from the sea-bottom, of a very massive character. The masonry of these piers is seventy feet diameter at the base, and fifty feet at the top, which is only a few feet above high-water mark. Upon these piers the vast structure of the cantilever towers rests.

The tops of these towers rise to a height of three hundred and sixty feet above the sea-level, and about two hundred feet above the level of the roadway. The bracket on the seaward side of each extends outwards towards Inchgarvie for six hundred and eighty feet. Upon Inchgarvie a similar structure is built, extending arms on both sides which come within three hundred and fifty feet, meeting the arms of the north and south cantilever piers. The intervening gaps of three hundred and fifty feet between the brackets are connected by girders, the completion of which is going on while we write. Each

of the north and south cantilevers is one thousand five hundred feet long, and that from Inchgarvie is one thousand six hundred and twenty feet long.

The total length of the brackets and girders is a few feet over a mile. The total length of the whole bridge from shore to shore is about a mile and a half; or, inclusive of the masonry arches, eight thousand two hundred and ninety-six feet. The masonry arches carry out the bridge from the south side about one thousand seven hundred and eighty feet, which is where the deep water begins. Over these arches the bridge is carried on steel lattice-girders, the distance between each stone pier being a hundred and sixty-eight feet. On the north side there are five of these stone piers; on the south, ten. The most seaward pier of each side is larger and stronger than its neighbours, and receives the end of the cantilever arm extended across the deep water.

Each of the cantilever piers sustains four huge steel columns, each as high as the cross on St. Paul's, and twelve feet in diameter. These columns are bedded in the masonry, which, again, is founded deep down in the rock below the sea-bottom. They are welded down with massive plates and bolts, and the idea of the strength of the foundation needed may be gathered from the fact that they have to sustain a weight of fifty thousand tons. From these steel towers spring out the cantilever arms as already described. The method on which they are constructed and supported is extremely interesting from a mechanical point of view; but to describe it would require the use of more technical language than is suited to these pages.

The permanent way of the railroad will run through the cantilevers about half-way under their highest points, and through the intermediate girders. The flooring is of steel, and the sleepers are placed, not across as on an ordinary railway, but in four longitudinal troughs. The rails are laid lengthwise on the sleepers, and the sides of the troughs act as guard-rails. Then, the rails are not joined in the usual manner, because allowance has to be carefully calculated for the alternate expansion and contraction of the immense mass of metal forming the bridge. Therefore the rails have been made in pieces with long tapering ends. These ends overlap each other for a considerable distance, so that the pieces will slide backward and forward with the expansion and contraction of the

metal-work. There is thus no break in the line of railway, and trains will pass over it in all states of the temperature with perfect smoothness and evenness. A strong hand-rail, and a screen against the wind, are also carried along the footway.

The entire mass is built of steel, and every plate and bolt was subjected to the most severe tests before being put in place. The tension steel is made to withstand a pressure of over thirty tons to the square inch, with an elongation in eight inches of not less than twenty per cent. The compression steel will stand a stress of thirty-five tons to the square inch, with an elongation in eight inches of not less than seventeen per cent. The average strength of the steel employed is one-half greater than that of the best wrought-iron.

Both on the viaduct over the stone piers, and that on the cantilevers, careful provision has been made for the action of changes of temperature, and the pressure of wind. The structure is so poised that the whole of the piers will act in concert in resisting pressure, both lateral and otherwise. A maximum wind pressure of fifty-six pounds per square foot of surface and train exposed, is provided against, and forty pounds is the highest recorded pressure in this country. The main portions of the bridge present an exposed surface estimated at seven and a half acres, and the pressure provided for on this surface is more than eight thousand tons. The pressure of the rolling of a passing train in a high wind has also been nicely calculated; and it is estimated that the vital portions of the bridge would stand a strain of nearly fifty thousand tons before showing signs of giving way.

As to the strength of the cantilever arms, Mr. Baker, one of the engineers, says that half-a-dozen ironclads could be hung from their ends. To those who have ascended the Eiffel Tower, it may give a vivid idea of the length of the spans to be told that the tower, laid alongside Forth Bridge, would only extend half-way across one of these spans.

We have likened the cantilever to two men stretching arms across a stream, and requiring a stick to complete the connection. In the case of the bridge, that stick is the girder. How was it placed?

When the cantilever arms came within three hundred and fifty feet of each other, the girders were brought along in two halves. One half was extended from each side of the facing cantilever, and was built

out from its base, at a steeper slope than it was intended to occupy. It was wedged up with timber and supported with steel straps, and so was gradually projected until it met its other half. Perhaps the process will be better gathered from a description of a recent writer during the construction:

"The girder is built up in two pieces, which are carried forward to meet one another in the middle. Till they meet, they are rigidly connected by ties at the top and supports at the bottom, on to the cantilevers, of which, for the moment, they form a part. As soon as the two halves get within a few feet of one another, advantage will be taken of a warm day—when the structure will have expanded to its full length—to lay the last plate between them, and to drop the rivets into their appointed holes. Then, as the iron-work cools down at night, the pull from the top of the towers will draw up the weight of the girder and counteract its natural tendency to sag in the middle, and the opportunity will be seized to form the junction true and straight. Once the girder is firmly joined up into one continuous piece, the temporary fastenings will be removed, and it will be allowed to drop into its permanent resting-place, on rollers at the end of the two cantilevers."

This, in effect, is how it was done, and the last girder was connected on the fifteenth of October last, in presence of the directors, who were thus enabled to walk from shore to shore. The weight of each girder is about eight hundred tons, and a very nice calculation has been necessary to preserve the exact balance of the cantilevers, with all this and other superimposed weight on the ends. It is obvious that every load added to one arm of the cantilever required a corresponding load at the other. Thus, about one thousand tons of iron ballast had to be placed at the south end of the Queensferry cantilever, to counteract the weight of the girder connecting it with the Inchgarvie cantilever.

During the six and a half years that the bridge has been in course of construction, a perfect army of workmen has been employed; large numbers at the most difficult and dangerous jobs. The year 1887 saw no fewer than four thousand men employed on the bridge; and the work went on continuously night and day, the electric light being laid on for the purpose. The mortality by accident has been very heavy, especially when the

caissons were being sunk for the piers; but the most elaborate precautions for life-saving were adopted, and when the men were employed on the elaborate iron-work of the cantilevers and girders, boats with life-buoys, etc., were always cruising about below.

As regards the maintenance of the bridge when completed, it is computed that at least one hundred men will be constantly required in attending to the painting, etc., the twelve acres of steel surface which it presents to the action of the atmosphere.

The actual cost of the undertaking has yet to be stated; but it will not be short of two millions. It will probably be something more, but not so much as three millions, the estimate which Mr. Acworth has made. The cost of the bridge itself, however, is not the whole of the outlay connected with the scheme of which it is part.

In order to complete the new northern railway service, a line of railway has had to be constructed from Winchburgh, on the Edinburgh and Glasgow line, to Dalmeny, near the south end of the Forth Bridge. On the north side of the Firth, lines had to be constructed to Inverkeithing and Burntisland, and the existing line to Dunfermline has had to be doubled. But much more difficult and costly than these works has been the construction of a new railway through the beautiful Valley of Glenfarg to Perth. This route, as has been said by Mr. Acworth, who has now established himself as an authority on railways, is by no means one which an engineer would choose of his own free will. Although for many years it was the regular mail-coach route from Edinburgh to Perth, no attempt has, until now, been made to carry a railway through Glenfarg. There is so little room for one, that the river has had to be diverted from its course, and the hills have had to be tunnelled. But it was necessary to enable the passengers by the east-coast line, via the Forth Bridge, to get to Perth in the shortest possible time. For Perth, as everybody knows, is the key to the Highlands; in the autumn season the centre of the busiest traffic in the whole country. Those only who have seen Perth Station in the middle of August, can understand the motive which has prompted all this mechanical effort and enormous expenditure which we have been describing.

To sum up the cost, then, we will take



the figures of an estimate recently made by the "Glasgow Herald," a paper from which we have taken many of our figures. First, there is the expenditure of the Forth Bridge Company:

For the Bridge itself . . .	£2,000,000
For the South Approach . . .	10,000
For the North Approach . . .	90,000
Total of Bridge . . .	£2,100,000

Next, there is the expenditure of the North British Railway Company:

For the Burntisland and Inverkeithing Lines . . .	£212,146
For the Glenfarg and other works on the North of the Forth . . .	434,048
For the Winchburgh and Dalmeny Lines . . .	123,518
Total of Railways . . .	£769,712
Add total of Bridge . . .	2,100,000
Total of undertaking . . .	£2,869,712

These are the estimates in the mean-time; but before the whole route is open to traffic, it is pretty safe to assume that the gross expenditure will be well on the way to four millions.

And for this tremendous expenditure and extraordinary exercise of mechanical ingenuity and inventive skill—for the building of the bridge has necessitated the constant evolution of clever devices for overcoming difficulties of all sorts—what is to be the compensating gain?

For one thing, it removes the monopoly of the traffic which the Caledonian Company have had north of Stirling. It will shorten the journey from London to Perth by twelve miles, and from London to Aberdeen by seventeen miles. This means the saving of about an hour on each journey, at the present rates of speed, and a corresponding saving in the communication with Dundee, Inverness, and other places in the north. To the Edinburgh people, however, who have hitherto had the tedious and uncomfortable passage of the Firth to make in steam-ferries, it means a great deal more, both in convenience and in economy of time.

Yet it must be confessed that the results do seem small for so much effort and outlay. And perhaps those critics are right who say that the bridge will never "pay." On the other hand, it is probable that the East Coast combined Railways do not expect it to pay in itself, but regard the work as actually imperative, in order to enable them to retain their fair share of the immense and increasing traffic of the far north.

These, however, are questions which, although interesting in themselves to al-

most everybody—for railways, whether as investments or as links in our internal communication, are undertakings of special concern to the whole community—do not call for further discussion here. Some reference to them was necessary to our subject, and that, whatever its commercial potentiality, is one of the mechanical wonders of the world. Even the Americans admit that they have nothing to beat it, and that the Eiffel Tower is "not a circumstance" to the Forth Bridge.

### "BENEFIT OF CLERGY."

#### A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

"MARY said you wanted me, uncle."

"Oh, yes; I sent her. Wait a moment, child. I must verify this before I close the book. His references are really most untrustworthy."

Lily climbed up, without saying a word, to the highest step of a library ladder which was near her, and having settled herself there, with an impatient twist of her little figure, she took a bit of string from her pocket and began to make various string puzzles.

The study was very dark, partly from a large guelder rose-tree which overshadowed the window, and partly because it was lined with books, the leather bindings of which, dulled with years and use, were darker in their general effect than the heaviest of oak wainscoting; and Lily made a curious, fascinating picture, as she sat there, in her light cotton frock, with a background of old brown commentaries on long-forgotten theological works to show up her small oval face, which was delicately coloured, under its brown tint, with a bright flush, and framed by a kind of rough aureole of very curly golden-brown hair—hair which was one of Lily's trials. It would not grow longer than a boy's, and it was altogether wrong with her complexion.

In the solitude of her chamber, she had once thought vaguely and darkly of such wicked vanities as dyes. However, frightened at the irrevocableness of the step, should she yield to that particular vanity, she went no further. Fortunately; for Lily was lovely. All the more lovely for the irregularity of her colouring.

She had come to the end of all available games with the string, when her uncle's voice made her look up, or rather, look down at him, quickly. But he was not speaking to her, not thinking of her.

"Ah," he said, eagerly, "as I thought—wrong, quite wrong. He never should have undertaken an annotated edition like this. Some of his things are good—that pamphlet on the metres of Horace showed considerable clearheadedness—but these notes are far too slight and cursory, and the references are faulty. I must call public attention to their defects; a work like mine is greatly hindered by—"

Lily's string, rolled into a tiny ball, slipped from her fingers, as she gave it a final toss, and alighted on her uncle's writing-table. Lily's foot gave a short, impatient tap on the ladder.

"Dear me! What is that noise? And what is this? String! String! Most extraordinary! I don't understand it."

The Vicar's dim, short-sighted eyes peered about him, and suddenly fell on the incongruous spot of light in his dark little study, and its still more incongruous position.

"Lily! What on earth are you doing there? Oh, yes, yes, I remember. You are waiting, of course. Come down, child, come down, and find my glasses. And where did I put that letter? Oh, here they both are. Lily, this came this morning."

Lily was standing in front of her uncle's writing-table now, with her hands behind her like a child saying a lesson, and a mischievous look in her eyes, which rested for a moment on the letter. She did not say a word to break the pause he made, and he went on again, rather slowly:

"It is the third letter of the kind I have had to answer, since you came to me—the third within two months. It really becomes both embarrassing and annoying. Such a serious waste of my time, too. Who is this Mr. Mason? Where have you met him? But sit down; I wish to read you the contents of his letter."

"Oh, uncle, don't mind about that," Lily interposed, with a little twist of the corners of her mouth, which gave her face a curious expression, composed of a longing to laugh and a faint suggestion of consternation.

Mr. Heathcote put on his glasses, unfolded the letter very slowly, and began:

"DEAR SIR,—I write to ask you to allow me to call upon you, with a view to my obtaining your consent to my paying my addresses to your niece, Miss Heathcote. I venture to think I am not wholly indifferent to her, and she has it

in her power to make me the happiest of men. If you would be good enough to appoint any day and hour at which it would be convenient for you to see me, I can, I believe, lay before you satisfactory details as to income, etc.

"Faithfully yours,

"G. H. MASON."

There was perfect silence in the little dark room when Mr. Heathcote finished. He himself was thinking what to say to Lily. It was so difficult to impress young minds, he found. But his thoughts were all scattered to the winds by a low laugh from the possessor of this particular young mind.

"Uncle, it's so ridiculous of the man," she said, at last. "I only—just talked to him."

"State your facts more clearly, Lily. I repeat my question. Where did you meet him?"

"Oh, he is Emily's cousin. I saw him at Ilfracombe last week, you know."

"You seem to have seen a good deal of him—to have encouraged him to hope, to say the least, Lily."

"I—oh—he wasn't quite so dull as every one else there, that's all, and I—of course, I—was glad; they're so stupid, there. He was rather nice; he got my hat one day when it went into the sea. It was my best one, and I was pleased with him, and I just—said so. Oh, how silly men are!"

"Lily, keep to the point. You wish me to tell this Mr. Mason—"

"That he is most foolish, uncle. As if one could care for a man like that! I've no patience with men."

The Vicar peered above his glasses at his niece's face with a very puzzled expression on his own.

"Well, well," he said, at last. "I don't understand young people of the present day. In my youth—not that I have any practical experience of my own to argue from—but, when I was young, I feel sure no man would have addressed such a letter to a young lady's guardian, unless she had given him very sufficient reason. And I cannot believe that you, Lily, could in that short space of time give a sufficient reason to three men. For that is what it amounts to. In May only, it was, surely, that I received that letter from Dr. Wilson—excellent young man—then—Lily, Lily, what are you doing?"

"I know just exactly what you're going to say, uncle, and I'm going."

She shut the door after her with such a jerk that several engravings absolutely shook in their places.

"All dear James's impetuous ways!" sighed the Vicar to himself. "I wish she had waited a moment, though. I do not recall the young man I intended to refer to, and yet I know there was another. Oh, yes; asked me to give him a curacy. Ridiculous! How could I displace Smith or Maynard? Said he liked the place so much, should like to work under me, and then wrote about Lily. Hardly so sincere as he seemed, I fear, poor fellow! Really, Lily is a great charge. I had no idea of all this when I promised poor James that she should live here when she left school—not that I should have hesitated, but it is certainly both anxious and disturbing. I shall not finish that paragraph before I go to the school. Dear me! no; it is twenty minutes to three now, and I must write to this Mr. Mason before I go out. This is really a terrible waste of my time."

The Vicar set aside his cherished work—a "Commentary on the Fathers, with an Appendix on Gregory of Nyssa"—made his words to the injured Mr. Mason as gentle as possible, placed the letter in his capacious pocket, and five minutes later transferred it to the village post-office, which, in the parish of Sweet Ancott, was a tiny opening in the outside wall of the building containing the village shop. An opening so garlanded and surrounded by roses and honeysuckle, that it was absolutely necessary to push them on one side in order to post a letter there, an act which demanded much faith on the part of strangers, who found it difficult to believe that letters so posted ever reached any less rustic and poetic destination.

Then he went on his way; not rejoicing, for his school was a trial to the good man. His scheme of rustic education embraced the three Rs only; and the development of these rudiments as inculcated by an enlightened Government did not appeal to his sympathies.

His ideas had received a shock from which they took long to rally, on the day when the village schoolmistress, in all the glory of a recent successful Government inspection, had made the children repeat to him that part of "King John" which had seemed to their "betters" of the Education Department eminently calculated to improve and enlarge the minds of the rustic rising generation. At the end of the most astonishing delivery of blank verse

with which his ears had ever been assailed, comments failed him; words were wholly inadequate to his feelings. He took refuge, after a few moments' silence, in a cross-examination on the Tree of Knowledge and the Fall of Man.

After that experience—thinking that these dangerous tendencies, against which he was powerless to rebel, should, at least, have all the counteracting influence he could bring to bear—he made his former weekly visit to the Temple of Erudition daily ones.

On this afternoon he finished his lesson in peace, and came away. But one and another, on his way up the steep, straggling village street, called him eagerly into their houses, for his beloved commentary did not absorb quite all his thoughts. Those dim, short-sighted eyes could shine with sympathy when necessary, and the claims of Gregory of Nyssa could go into the background before the claims of many a struggling, patient man and woman. So it was nearly six o'clock before he came within sight of his own gates.

He had just reached them when he saw before him one of his young women parishioners. They were a trial even greater than the school. Their curtsies had grown small by degrees and beautifully less, till they curtsied no longer, but bowed to him with an inclination so dignified that the good man did not always recognise the girls he had held in his arms in their infancy, and more than once had taken off his hat to them—or, their dresses. Their dresses were another grief to him in their brilliant hues, arranged in the latest fashion, or what was understood as such by the time that mysterious entity had found its way from its birthplace to Sweet Ancott.

To this particular girl he had given many a word of fatherly exhortation on the subject of dress; but his words had, apparently, not sunk deep into the heart of Jennie Brown, whose garments at that moment were wonderful and startling indeed.

Tenderly, wisely, and gently, he flattered himself, he approached his subject now. Jennie was certainly growing impressed by his theories of what quiet, womanly dress and behaviour should be, when, suddenly, the Vicar felt that he had lost her attention completely, and, looking up, saw before him, walking towards home with short, rapid steps, Lily—Lily, clad in the brightest of scarlet cotton gowas, her hat set on the back of her rough, tossed

hair, her fishing-rod over her shoulder, and beside her, struggling with the weight of a heavy basket of trout, the junior curate, Mr. Maynard, untidy, dishevelled, his soft felt hat dented all over, and his hands very dirty from winding up Lily's line.

Jennie Brown departed abruptly. Lily seized the Vicar's arm with both her hands and exclaimed:

"Oh, uncle, don't you want some trout for supper? Mr. Maynard caught only two of these, I caught the rest, and they're beauties. He's coming to supper, too."

"I doubt if Mr. Maynard has time," said the Vicar, in a mild, but distinctly crushing manner; "the library opens at seven, and I think Mr. Smith is at Esdale."

Mr. Maynard looked rather more dishevelled, more dented, more untidy, and said, in a subdued voice:

"Certainly, sir; I am going to the library at once. Good night, Miss Heathcote."

Lily seized the basket of trout, and flew into the house. The Vicar followed slowly, perplexed, anxious, wondering. Maynard—Maynard, who had been so hard-working, so energetic in the parish always—Maynard wasting a whole afternoon like this!

Mr. Heathcote began to think of it all carefully. Every day, on his return from the school, he usually met Mr. Smith or Mr. Maynard in the village engaged in some sort of parish business. But now, he remembered, slowly, that he had very seldom done so lately; and though he had, of course, seen them in their places in church and at meetings, he had seen little of either of them incidentally for weeks past. And he had himself, two days before, paid a pastoral visit to the distant, outlying hamlets of his parish. He had thought of her words as chronic discontent when a very grumbling denizen of those regions had told him, "We ain't seen none of the parsons here lately." But now, as he remembered, he thought they might be true.

Dimly these, and one or two other smaller details began to dawn on the Vicar; dimly and faintly he began to perceive that this diminution of energy had occurred only since Easter—that, in fact, it coincided more or less with Lily's arrival at Sweet Ancott in April.

The good man's head went round at this discovery, and he stood quite still in the middle of his gravel drive to try and think it over.

If he had thought of Lily at all when he was not actually with her, he had thought of her vaguely as sewing, playing the piano, or as doing "something women do," said he to himself, almost piteously. "But apparently she has been making mischief everywhere. Only to-day—only to-day I wrote to tell that unfortunate man that her careless thoughtlessness had led him into a mistake! And now, here is Maynard's time wasted, and his head turned, probably. Smith's, too, for all I know. Well, certainly, this won't do. I must speak to Lily very seriously—far more seriously than I have ever yet been called upon to speak to her of anything."

With this resolve fresh in his mind, the Vicar hastily extricated his stick from the hole in the gravel into which he had inserted it in his agitation of mind, and went on his way to the drawing-room, thinking vaguely that, at any rate, that was the spot in which he ought to seek Lily.

She was there. She had taken her spoils to the kitchen, and was sitting peacefully on the broad window-sill, behind the curtain, reading.

"Lily, my dear child," began the Vicar very solemnly, from the further end of the room.

There was no answer. He came a few steps further, and went on:

"Lily, give me your careful attention for a few moments. Lay your book aside. I wish to speak to you on a grave matter. I cannot express to you my feelings when I discovered, just now, that Mr. Maynard's time had been wasted thus. Before I go further, I must really request that you never accompany him——"

"He accompanied me," Lily put in.

"That you do not go out with him again. Setting aside the waste of time, it is altogether unseemly that you should do so. I must ask for your promise, Lily, that this does not occur again."

There was no answer.

"Lily?" the Vicar repeated; but still she did not speak.

There was a slight movement somewhere; but no words came. The Vicar waited an instant, then he walked up to the window and pulled the curtain aside.

No Lily was there. Down on the lawn below stood a small scarlet figure, panting with the jump down, and holding up a laughing face. After one or two exaggerated gasps for breath, Lily said, looking up at him, saucily:

"I don't want to waste your time,



uncle, in talking; but it's no good for me to promise. I might want Mr. Maynard again, you know. He's very strong, and carries the basket much better than Harry Blake."

With that the scarlet figure raced down the lawn and out of sight. The poor Vicar turned back into the drawing-room utterly at a loss; except for one resolve, which took the clearest and most determined form in his mind: namely, that he would find for both curates plenty of work through all the next day, and for many a day to come.

With that end in view he sallied forth early next morning; and having laid his commands on Mr. Maynard, and, indeed, seen him start for the furthest houses in the farthest hamlets to look up truant children, he then proceeded to the dwelling of Mr. Smith, for whom he had arranged an equally engrossing mission. He knocked for some time at the door without receiving any answer, and when the landlady at last appeared, all the information he could gain from her was that Mr. Smith was "out."

"Went out at half-past ten, and never said nothing about his dinner," concluded the much-injured woman.

It is always dangerous to judge from appearances; but to do so in her case would inevitably have led to the inference that it was almost a farce for Mr. Smith to mention the meal in question, so incapable did she look of thinking of dinner, much less of cooking it.

The Vicar ignored that delinquency on the part of his curate, and simply said that he would go up to Mr. Smith's room and write him a note. He ascended the narrow stairs and opened the door of that sanctum. From the mass of litter, clerical and otherwise, upon the table, he extricated writing-materials and sat down.

Something fell out of the blotting-case as he opened it, something that fluttered to the ground. He picked it up carefully. It was a note in a small, square envelope.

Surely he knew the dashing handwriting, which nearly covered the limited surface; the enormous capital R of Reverend was familiar enough. It was—yes, it was, most certainly, a note from Lily to Mr. Smith.

The Vicar looked aghast, indeed, as he laid it down on the table. Decidedly he had not taken the matter in hand a day too soon. Taking up a pen, he wrote his note quickly, making it shorter, sterner, and more peremptory than any note from

him to his curate had ever been before. Fastening it up, he laid it in a conspicuous position on the closed blotting-case, and then turned round to see what time it was by the mantelpiece clock, before he rose to go. But there was something propped up against it, so that he could only see the minute-hand—some dark object or other. He got up, and went towards the mantelpiece to remove it; but not until he actually stretched out his hand to take it, did his short-sighted eyes see what it was. Then he saw too clearly, too well. It was a photograph of Lily—Lily herself! The same that graced his own drawing-room table!

"Bless my soul!" cried the agitated Vicar. "Can she have given it him? What are things coming to? To think—to think that I never dreamt of this! I must hurry out and look for Smith, at once. He must be somewhere. And then; but dear me, dear me, what can I say to Lily?"

But Smith was, apparently, nowhere. Every haunt the Vicar tried knew him not. Not even the aid of various zealous urchins set free from school, and only too willing to help "Muster Heathcote find the tall 'un," as Mr. Smith was familiarly known, could produce him.

With a vexatious sense of failure and worry, the Vicar was fain, at twenty minutes to one, to seek his own mansion for luncheon. As he strolled, hot and tired, up the drive, a faint sound of voices fell on his ears from the thicket of rhododendrons on his right. Voices, no; it was one voice—a rather monotonous one. Mr. Heathcote stood still for a moment to listen. Then he pushed aside the rhododendrons hastily and went through. Half-a-dozen paces brought him to two great ash-trees. They were very thick, and a tiny murmuring brook ran close beside them, making that part of the garden cool even on the hottest days. But the sight that met the Vicar's eyes at this moment took away from him all thought of cool, rest, or calm.

In her hammock between the two ash-trees, swinging slowly, lay Lily; on a low branch of one of the trees sat Mr. Smith, reading aloud. Between them was a table with tumblers and lemon-squash.

Both became aware of the Vicar's presence at the same instant. Mr. Smith started and let his book fall. Lily looked up and said, slowly:

"Why, uncle, how hot you look! Why

don't you come and sit here? Mr. Smith is reading me the 'Children of Gibeon.' It's much too hot to read to myself, and it's good practice for him. I think he reads very badly in church, don't you? I've told him so— Oh, is it lunch-time?" as the Vicar said, with a sort of gasp:

"Smith, there's a note at your rooms from me; Lily, it is one o'clock," and strode indoors forthwith.

### WILFUL WASTE.

THAT "wilful waste makes woeful want," is an old tried proverb; and equally true it is that "a house divided against itself cannot stand." Yet, as if we were a nation of fools, we English are going dead against both. Take the latter first. There's the strike, which has cost the dock companies they say two millions, besides what it has cost every family among the strikers. But, worse than this, because less notorious, is the yearly loss, through the want of patriotism of our workers. The Wholesale Co-operative Societies, whose headquarters are in Manchester, thrive exceedingly. Their yearly sales in England alone—and they have branches in Scotland—amount to nearly six millions, of which three-fourths are for provisions. Yet of this they spend a million and a half on foreign produce. Their buyers go to Denmark, Germany, America, everywhere, for what, with a little management, might be produced better, and more cheaply, at home. There's the rub—the little management. Who is to give it? The foundryman can't be expected to, nor the mill-hand, nor the miner. He has enough to do to make his Co-operative Society a success. A success many of them are. Last year a meeting of delegates from several co-operative societies declared so large an unused balance that they carried a resolution to start a cheese-factory in America, so as to get their cheese without the middleman. It was only by great persuasion, and after a regular outcry in the local papers, that they were persuaded to compromise, and to found their factory in Canada, instead of in the States. Here was want of patriotism with a vengeance. Thousands of English acres going out of cultivation; landlords taking to game-breeding as a business, because tenants can't be had at any rent; tenants stinting the land of the needful labour, so that in "high-farming counties" you find fields of

thistles and ragwort, such as you look for in the worst parts of Ireland; and poor Hodge, for lack of employment, swarming into the already over-full country towns, or making his way to unhealthy Queensland, the only colony that will assist his passage. All this; and yet the "artisan capitalist" goes abroad for his cheese and butter and butcher's-meat, forgetting that, though he gains just now perhaps a penny in the pound by so doing, he stands to lose ten times more than that in the near future, because every guinea that he spends abroad diminishes labourer's, farmer's, aye, landlord's, power of purchasing what he makes; and must soon, therefore, circumscribe his market.

No doubt, at bottom, the fault is with the farmer. It is just the case of the Co-operative Stores over again. If the London shopkeepers had listened to reason, the Stores would never have been started. But, despite all warnings, the urban and suburban retailers would keep up the old credit prices. And now more than half their custom is gone; and, alas, their stubbornness has half-ruined the country shopkeeper, who can't help charging a little more than "My Lady," or the parson's or doctor's wife gives at the Stores, and without whom country life would be at a standstill, seeing that two-thirds of the labourers in the parish are in his debt. So the farmer has been content that English corn, and even English meat, and butter, and cheese, should be beaten out of the market in our great manufacturing centres by the greater cheapness of the foreign article; and yet, strangest thing of all, the farmer did not get after all the high prices that English articles used to command. He has been, all round, the dupe of the middlemen: of miller and corn-factor, of grazier and butcher. What the co-operative artisans should have done—had their wisdom and their patriotism been equal to their faculty for making bargains—is to have put pressure on the farmers. "We mean to have our meat at the American price," they should have said; "and we are sure that, with proper management you can afford to sell it to us as cheap as they do." So he could, as Mr. Tallerman, famous for tinned meat, magnanimously explains in his book on "Agricultural Distress." The secret is, for farmers to combine and slaughter their beasts themselves, instead of having to "sink the offal," and thereby lose at least a fifth of the value.

It seems simple enough; the difficulty is how to get it done. The farmers, seemingly, cannot combine. A few did open a little store in London; but the thing must be taken in hand at a dozen centres, and there you must have proper cattle lairs and slaughter-houses, such as those at Barrow-in-Furness.

Paris owed to the first Napoleon the suppression of private slaughter-houses and the setting up of five "abattoirs"—just lately concentrated into one, in which nothing is lost, and everything is utilised at once.

Under our system, the farmer sells a whole live beast to the dealer at the price which it is supposed its two sides will weigh after killing; all the rest he has to throw in gratis. The butcher loses, too, for he has to buy the whole beast, when, perhaps, his class of customers only take prime joints, when, at any rate, he has no use for horns, and hide, and fat, and tripe.

Who does not know what a wretchedly foul place a country butcher's slaughter-house usually is, and what waste goes on there, from the blood, which has many uses, to the fat, which regreeters buy up—often after it has got quite stale—and export to Holland at twopence a pound, whence it comes back to us as margarine, and is sold for eightpence? That is the mischief. At all our multitudinous little slaughter-houses things wait about till they are more than half spoiled. This makes the difference between the vile, leathery garbage, called tripe, which you see dished up in frowsy little shops in the dreary back streets of our big towns, and the appetising "tripe de Caen," a staple Parisian dainty. Go over an "abattoir," and note how everything is cleansed and prepared and made the most of at once; and then watch a Northern railway, bringing to some Lancashire town, its morning load of bullocks' paunches, gathered from half a hundred slaughter-houses. They have been emptied? Yes; and that's all. They are lying in filth; the stench from them is enough to make you abjure tripe for all the rest of your days.

Here is waste at both ends. The farmer loses, Mr. Tallerman calculates, nearly three pounds sterling on every beast he sells, making a total of more than five millions—that is, nearly the cost of all the meat that we import—on all the cattle sent to market. He, poor man, cannot recoup himself, except by standing out for yet more reduc-

tion in rent, and by employing even less labour than he now does. The butcher loses, too. He has to sell, for next to nothing, the inferior pieces to the East-Enders or Clare-Marketers, who display them in uninviting morsels under their flaring gas-lights, and tempt passing buyers with their monotonous chant of "Buy, buy; buy, buy." He, of course, rights himself by charging more for what he does sell; but the mischief remains, and is just this: so much produce is wasted, and no one profits but the salesman, whom we could all so well do without.

In America they do things as neatly and economically as in France. Pickled tripe, brawn, and half-a-dozen other tinned luxuries are the outcome of that "offal" which we leave till it gets half spoiled. You know the country proverb about the pig: "Not a bit of him is wasted." Why? because Hodge takes care of that. His rent-payer is killed under his own eyes. He does not "sink the offal." Neighbours, when they hear the well-known squeal, compete with one another for this "offal." And when the parson's pig is killed, his cook makes up half-a-dozen dishes of "meat," which go to the maimed or the widows.

The farmer is at another disadvantage. His beasts generally have to make a journey which lessens both weight and quality. Knowing men, like Professor Gamgee, calculate the loss at eight pounds a day on a quiet road—that is, in five days forty pounds of the best meat; while on the rail from Aberdeen to London the loss is five per cent. of the gross weight. And it is not the bones, and horns, and hoofs, and sinews that shrink, but the nourishing parts. To a well-fed bullock, nursed in its stall like a baby in the cradle, sheltered from fierce sun, jealously guarded from noises of all kinds, the journey to the cattle-market must be the worst of torments. The hooting and howling, the thirst caused by fright; no wonder Scotch-killed beef brings, as a rule, twopence a stone—that is, a farthing a pound—more in the Central Meat Market than the same beef killed in London. The Irish beasts have the worst time of all. Have you ever travelled across in a cattle-steamer, and seen the poor things in a gale?—a struggling mass of horns, and tails, and undulating backs, along which "Jack," when a rope wants hauling in, runs as nimbly as if he was on the main deck. Things are so bad—the bruised state of the beasts when they arrive makes the meat so unsatisfactory—that early this year

meetings of dealers were held at Glasgow and Liverpool, and the Lord Lieutenant was memorialised on the subject. But cattle still land in the larger island often twenty and thirty per cent. worse than when they left the smaller one. Buyers secure themselves by paying ten per cent. less for Irish beasts. The only way, says Mr. Tallerman, is for the Irish to kill their own cattle, and send the meat over in refrigerators. The farmer will then be able to pay a better rent, for he will get the worth of his beast; and many industries—tanning, boot-making, etc.—which once thrived in Ireland, will have a chance of reviving.

Of all "Irish ideas," the most ridiculous is that they, with the best pastures in the world—in Limerick and Tipperary—should send over their lean stock instead of fattening it themselves. The whole plan is ruinous. At the worst of the bad time, when "horn" was down as low as "corn"—instead of one being up, as used to be in the old days—I have known "lean Irish stock," which had tramped right across England, sold in a little Norfolk town for less than it had cost to bring them there. Even in the hottest weather, the freezing-chamber, properly managed, is a complete safeguard.

What is the use of living on the verge of the twentieth century, when farmers still do as they used to do in Charles the Second's time? The worst of Irish tyrants is the "salesmaster." He fiercely opposes every move in the right direction, because he lives, and buys land, and sets up for a "jintleman intirely" on what he robs from the farmer. A notable case of this occurred lately in Dublin. The Corporation erected on the city boundary excellent abattoirs. Unfortunately, they are just outside it, instead of inside; therefore, the butchers refuse to use them, and cannot be compelled to do so, because the bye-laws do not extend an inch beyond the boundary line. Vested interests, and those of very modern growth, are at least as strong in London as in Dublin. Not long ago an Essex, or Surrey, or Middlesex farmer could bring up his meat and sell it himself, his wife coming with him and bringing her poultry or butter. Now everything must be done through a salesman. The Corporation has actually leased all the shops in the Central Meat Market to dealers, to the virtual exclusion of the producers or their agents. These "Bummares," as they are called, who number a hundred and fifty-four in

the Meat Market, and fifty-six in the Poultry Market, get little or no meat from the farmers direct, but are mostly carcass-butchers, who buy live stock at Islington, slaughter it, and then sell at the Central. Their minimum commission is two and a half per cent.; and the value of last year's sales having exceeded fourteen and a half millions, this amounts to over three hundred and sixty thousand pounds, of which the producer is mulcted, the other gains of the dealers making the sum up to at least a million sterling—a large sum for the struggling meat-grower to lose in only one of the many departments which come between him and the consumer. Nor have consumers any freer access to the Central Market than producers. Except on Saturday afternoons, when there is a lot of deteriorated meat to be got rid of, and when some of "the two hundred and ten" deign to sublet their stands, the public are strictly shut out. And yet the "Central" was meant to be a market, that is, a place set apart for public convenience, the tolls from which should be just enough to keep it in decent order. You try to sell your nice little pigs, just proper London weight, and not too fat. I tried once, and what with commission and expenses, I found I got about two pence a stone less than I could have sold them for in the village. There are too many middlemen, and they make too good a thing of it. They are as bad as the regraters, against whom our grandfathers used to rail when corn was dear. "Live and let live" is a good motto; but these fellows live so well that the farmer goes bankrupt, and the public has to pay more than a fair price; and the amount of waste, over and above the money loss, is enough to make farming pay, instead of being a losing game, if the farmer could get it. What is to be done? The "agricultural interest" has to be considered. If we ruin the farmer, we ruin Hodge along with him; and a country that depends on the foreigner for its food supply is, even in these days of steam, in a bad way. Besides, you must pay for your imported food; and every year the manufacturing competition becomes keener, and the protection, against us Quixotic free-traders, more rigorous. Mr. Tallerman's plan is virtual Protection without Act of Parliament. To the buyers he says:

"You spend thirty-four millions on food. You have every right to do the best for yourselves—to buy in the cheapest market.



I don't want you to give a penny more for a thing because it's English grown, unless it's plainly seen to be a penny better. All I say is, look at home, and see if, by putting pressure on the right people, by squeezing out the middleman, or at least by giving him rather less free play than he now has, you cannot get things here cheaper than you can abroad. Take your time; consider well; for, if you go on as you're going, you'll just deprive labourer and farmer and landlord of their 'purchasing power;' and they, you know, are after all your best customers."

To the farmers he says:

"What a strange thing it is that your fathers made money when the price of stock was low, while you were losing during all those golden years when it was high. I know: the rinderpest, and foot-and-mouth disease, and such like, partly due to your own mania for overfeeding. Really prime beasts are sadly few compared with the population; and inferior qualities you are forced to 'sell for anything' now so much comes in from abroad. Well, what you have got to do is to grow the best of meat, and combine so as to get it killed for you instead of 'sinking the offal.' Moreover, let each butcher buy just what he wants. Some will buy only prime joints; some, all sorts. But each, not having to buy what he doesn't want, will be able to give more for what he does. Use up your tripe and such like while it is good. Do not send it a long journey to get half spoiled and then made unwholesome by being set right again with chemicals. Make your own margarine; do not let the Dutch do it, at a loss to the British nation of sixpence per pound. And did you never hear of what the Yankees call 'small goods'—sausages, collared head, dressed beef? Out of every animal you can, if you work while it is fresh, make a hundred and fifty pounds of these things, and can then well afford to sell them at half what they cost in American or Australian tins."

But all this, of course, means co-operation, that is, working together. In every district the farmers must set up something like what has been started at Barrow, the big new town—mostly due to one man's enterprise, as Fleetwood was to Mr. Whitworth's—which has grown up near the ruins of famous old Farness abbey. And in many districts tinning will be needless; there will be a demand for "small goods" as fast as they are made.

Children's dinners, too, have become an educational fact. In some places, half-a-dozen societies are providing them free, or under cost price. These must combine. Why not? There will be fewer secretaries, one "staff" instead of half-a-dozen, that is, less subscription money spent in salaries. If they combine and deal first-hand with the local farmers' abattoir, we may say, Q. E. F., as Euclid does, "what was required is done;" everything will come right for everybody. The "made goods" will be taken up at once, the marbled fat and lean pieces, minced with rice or lentils, will make the most appetising of dishes. The farmer will get a good price for all he now "sinks" into the dealer's pocket, and the poor, little, undeveloped town child will grow up into something like what an English child ought to be; aye, and an Irish child, too. For Ireland suffers far worse than England from the present system.

I pay a shilling a pound for the best Limerick ham. It is as good as the world can produce; and I bless Messrs. Matheson for so bravely keeping up the trade begun by Mr. Russell, the Cumberland man, who took his energy to Ireland. But I can well understand Pat cursing the Saxon when, judging by what he gets out of the bargain, he fancies I only pay sevenpence instead of a shilling. The conditions of the problem are these: Ireland is a food-producing country; the Irish farmer has for some time been getting ruinously low prices, and he has laid the fault on the English purchaser, whereas the real sinner is the middleman, whether grazier or salesman. Let Ireland kill her own beasts, and send over the best joints in cool chambers, using up the small goods "to feed her own sadly underfed people," and then two good results will be attained: less political "gas" of an explosive character will be let loose in the sister isle, and less whisky—for which an empty stomach acquires a craving—will be drunk.

There is sense in all this; and, seeing the yearly meat-crop brings in seventy millions to the salesmen, and to the butcher nearly ninety millions—is, in fact, far the richest of our crops—it is worth the farmer's while to see if he cannot manage to live by all this outlay. He must be a farmer of the new and improved kind, not one who is chiefly intent on himself laying on flesh, as if to illustrate the proverb, "who feeds fat oxen should himself be fat." Not a man who is content to sit for

hours after his dinner at the "ordinary," smoking a "churchwarden," soaking in strong liquors, and dropping now and then a solemn word of little meaning; but quick-eyed, restless, all agog for new improvements. Such men will find that farming still pays if common sense is allowed a voice in the arrangements. And as soon as the farmers have found that out, they will be able to meet the purchaser more than half-way, and to prove to him that he need not go abroad for what he can get as cheap, and much better, at home. Farmers have been slow to recognise that—now we have ocean steamers, and freezing-chambers, and all that—the old "take it, or leave it; you'll get nothing else" plan is out of date. They must "meet the times," like other people.

Look at butter. London and the big towns used to be thankful for anything they could get—"Welsh pail," "Cork barrel," "Clonmel firkin," "Dorset" from a dozen English counties; all unequal—often, especially in the English butters, a layer of sour among the sweet; all in heavy casks which had a dirty look, no matter how really clean they might be. Now that we can get Danish in its neat, little white barrels, Brittany in its dainty baskets, etc., the farmer has had to give in, and to mind his churning, and to start creameries whereby an even quality of butter is ensured.

Had he done this with flour, the corn-lands of Essex would not now be lying untilled, or let for a nominal rent. I saw in Belfast a score of carts distributing to the bakers small bags of American flour. "Yes," said my friend, "that's how we're ruined. We don't say, 'Keep out foreign wheat,' but we do say, 'Keep out the foreign-manufactured article.' We lose every way. They get the bran, which ought to help feed our stock." And Ireland is full of big corn-mills falling to ruin, which might have been busily at work, had the Irish farmer taken the trouble not only to get his corn ground, but to send it out in small bags to suit the needs of customers. It is an axiom that, "the smaller are your packages, the less need of middlemen to distribute them." This holds of meat, as well as of wheat.

No doubt about it—Mr. Tallerman's scheme would make the farmer an independent man instead of being the slave of his miller and his banker. It would enable the artisan to feed himself and his children with really nourishing food at less than

the red herring and "scrag end" of meat now costs. Above all, it would prevent that waste which makes everything dearer without doing anybody any good. And it may be done, if only farmers will combine; and if a capitalist here and there will give them a start. We send our money out to South American mines, to Brazilian tramways, to ventures everywhere, while there is this plain call to keep money, and thereby to keep production, more within the four corners of the United Kingdom.

## THE BRIDGE HOUSE.

A SERIAL STORY.

By B. DEMPSTER.

Author of "Two and One," "Through Gates of Gold,"  
"Mrs. Silas E. Bunthorp," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER IV.

MISS GARTH, herself, slept beautifully. She rose the next morning prettier than ever, so Aston thought, when she greeted him at breakfast time.

After lunch, he took her round the garden. Near the mills was a slight, wooden bridge, consisting of a plank and a railing, spanning the river. She went on it, to look down at the water, as it came foaming and eddying from the churning of the great water-wheel. These wheels—with their mystery of silent strength, their dark suggestions of sucking currents, their treachery of tortured waters falling sullenly from the slime-stained bars of the great wheel which had caught them and ground them into raging foam, only waiting in their turn, for some victim to batter and bruise out of all shape, in revenge for their own torture—had a deep fascination for her.

"I don't exactly know why they interest me," she said, resting her hand on the slight rail and looking down at the swirling, seething waters, while the roar of the great wheel filled her ears. "They remind me somehow of fate. Like the water we go hurrying along, only to be caught by that relentless wheel, which churns for a little all our life into fear and dread, and then flings us off to take up our own course again, and get along as best we can. I always wonder if the water ever feels quite the same again."

"Probably not," he said, looking towards the great wheel too.

"And then, they always remind me of ghosts"—a laugh taking the place of the

dreaming tone. "Have you a ghost in this mill?"

"We have two," he replied, with much gravity.

"Oh, that's a pity! Who could respect two ghosts? You really ought to have got rid of one at least."

Something curious came into his eyes. Something so sad, so hopeless, that it startled her; but as she looked it was gone. He turned away with a laugh that sounded natural enough.

"I am glad you don't approve of divided allegiance. One ghost is quite enough for any respectable family."

"Do tell me their stories," she exclaimed.

"It's the usual thing: boots upon the stairs, and gliding white forms," he returned lightly, having reasons of his own for not entering into details. "How do you like Riverbridge?"

"Oh, very much!" with womanly determination to ask Miss Ross all about the ghosts at once. "It is the sleepest, funniest, old place I ever saw. Miss Ross introduced me to several people who——"

"Are the sleepest, funniest people."

"Never try to finish a sentence for any one—least of all a girl," she said, laughing. "I was certainly not going to call them 'sleepy,' having a very vivid recollection of the way Riverbridge had taken her in generally. She felt certain that not a ribbon of her dress, not a flaw in her complexion, had escaped notice. "There was one dear old gentleman, who said the prettiest speeches to me in the world; but then, he was a doctor, so I am afraid they don't count."

"Dr. Copland?" said Aston, a sudden sense of discomfiture again touching him as she spoke of Copland as a "dear old gentleman." Copland was only a few years older than himself. But he recovered himself, and felt he would soon be able to accept the position unmoved. He had grown so accustomed to being the eligible bachelor of the place, suitable, apparently, in the Riverbridge opinion, for the age of any girl, from sixteen upwards, that he had quite forgotten, till she showed him, with such frank, uncompromising truth, that age was already on him.

Miss Garth had numerous visitors that afternoon. The society of Riverbridge was eager to do its duty. It was delighted at any change or excitement, trifling as it might be, and was only too pleased to call on Mr. Aston's ward. Nearly all

those who had heard of her earlier arrival came; and Miss Ross and she had quite a levée. The society was provincial in the extreme; but it was very civil, and even embarrassingly imbued with a sense of her superior position. But when she came to analyse it, as she changed her dress for dinner, this admiration all seemed to rise not from herself as being herself, but as being the ward of Mr. Aston on the Bridge.

"I suppose Mr. Aston is a great deal thought of in the place," she said, reflectively, to Miss Ross, as they sat working after dinner, while Aston smoked his pipe in the dining-room.

"Oh yes; I should think so. He is one of the most respected men in the place. Everybody likes to get his advice. If anything is going to be done—whether it is to put up railings round a well, or build a wing to the Infirmary—everybody follows Brend's lead. He's been here a long time, too, you see—twenty years; and the life he has led, so upright and industrious, has made him honoured by every one."

"And now I want to hear about the ghosts."

But Miss Ross refused to tell their stories.

"It makes Brend so angry. He says it is all rubbish; and I promised him not to tell you anything about them."

Daisy laughed, and dropped the subject. But perhaps it still haunted her. For that night she could not sleep. Her mind was on the alert, with a curious, expectant excitement, which could neither have been analysed nor accounted for. When she did fall asleep at last, it was a strange, troubled sleep, through which ran all the time a sense of coming danger. Suddenly she awoke—actively, broadly awake—and sat up, her eyes straining themselves into the darkness, her ears sharpened to hear the faintest sound that could break the death-like stillness of the night. She was waiting for something. She felt it in her whole being. The coming of that invisible, pursuing danger which had followed her through her dreams into waking life.

Ah! it had come.

Slowly, wearily, heavily—each step a protest against, and yet full all the time, of a dreadful despair of the fate that was driving them on—came the sound of feet on the staircase. Her ears, strained till they would have heard a pin fall, caught the sound of them as they passed up from the lowest stair. They

mounted slowly, each footfall beating out in the silence of the night that dreadful protest against the power driving them.

Up, up. They had reached the lower landing which divided the staircase, one flight branching off to the back of the house, the other mounting to the front, where her room lay. Were they coming her way?

Yes! Up! Still up!

To what dreadful shape did they belong? The cold drops of moisture gathered on her brow; every atom of colour faded from her parted lips; her heart beat in heavy, irregular blows.

Ah! Heavens! Would no one stop those dreadful feet? They were there! At the head of the staircase now. They would cross the landing. Oh, if they should come and find her there alone—alone!

A stifled, inarticulate cry broke from her lips. She sprang out of bed. There was no sound now. No. Because they were creeping—creeping towards her. With one wild scream she dashed at the door, and, tearing it open, ran out on to the landing. There was just a pale glimmering of moonshine falling through the window. Otherwise, the landing was dark and empty. Only for a second. The door facing her at the other side of the landing opened. Aston, still dressed, appeared on the threshold. He had heard the scream.

"Good heavens!" he cried, as the slender, white-robed figure ran with outstretched hands into the faint, pale moonlight. "What is it?"

"Oh, save me! Save me!" And then with one stride he was at her side, and had caught her as she fell fainting into his arms.

#### CHAPTER V.

"It's the most extraordinary thing I ever did in my life!"

Miss Garth, sitting up in bed, eating her breakfast, next morning, looked up at Miss Ross, who was standing by her, with eyes in which wonder, vexation, shame, and a faint lingering of superstitious dread, mingled.

"I'm always dreadfully frightened of ghosts. At least, I should be if I met one; but what possessed me to get into such a mad fright about those steps, last night, I can't think!"

"And it was only Brend coming up to his room," Miss Ross said, with a laugh;

but she looked a little curiously at the girl, as if she, too, wondered what could possibly have disturbed her so.

Miss Garth flushed scarlet.

"He must think me a dreadful little fool," she said, stirring the cream into her tea.

"No, he doesn't. He's very unhappy about your having such a fright. He sat up later than usual last night. I wish he wouldn't do it. He doesn't take half enough rest. But, sometimes, he can't sleep, when he gets one of those moods on."

"What moods?"

"Oh, it's his liver," said Miss Ross, cheerfully, sitting down by the bedside. "I know what that is. It takes you all sorts of ways. And his way is this gloomy sort of fit, and an impossibility to sleep. No one knows what I suffer with mine, too; but I never say anything about it."

Miss Garth, slowly crumbling a piece of toast, was too absent-minded to sympathise.

"But it was odd," she said, abruptly, looking up with grave, questioning eyes. "Why should I have been so terrified? I can't describe what I felt. Once before, while I was undressing, I thought I heard a stealthy step outside my door; but when I listened, there was nothing—and—"

"Of course, that was it," said Miss Ross, hurriedly; "you remembered that in your dreams, and—"

"Oh yes!" impatiently. "I have thought of all that. But even that doesn't account for my fear. It was very ridiculous; but I was afraid. Oh, so afraid!"

And an involuntary shiver moved her.

"My dear Daisy, eat your breakfast."

"I really do believe there was something in it," not paying any attention to the entreaty. Then, with a little half-shamed laugh, "Was it anything to do with your ghost, do you think? Do tell me the story."

And Daisy was so coaxing, so pleading, that Miss Ross finally yielded on the condition that she ate her breakfast.

"There is rather a funny thing about it," she said, really enjoying the prospect of telling the story, in spite of Aston's disapproval. "The ghost is never seen—at least in the house; but it is always heard. There is a noise as if some one were walking up the stairs: heavy, dragging footsteps, as if the person coming up were very weary. It was really very curious your fancying all those things about Brend's footsteps last night."



"Very," with a slight shiver, which she hastily tried to hide by taking a mouthful of toast. Though every hour was lessening the effect of the night's fright, so terribly real had been the horror of those footsteps that, even this morning, she could not forget.

"It was Mr. Aston's great-grandfather who first bought this house. There were no mills then. The next Aston started them. He was a young man when he came here, and had one son, a little boy of two. They say his wife was rich, and that he had run away with her. She died soon after they came here, giving birth to another son. Mr. Aston became quite wrapped up in the two boys; but he was fondest of the youngest. He grew fonder of him every day, and, at last was often unjust to the elder boy. James, the elder, was always steady; but Anthony, as every one expected, turned out wild. He got so bad, that, at last, even his father could believe in him no more, and forbade him to come to the house.

"But he broke his heart over doing it, and died soon after. He was only about fifty. James came into the money, and built the mills, and grew richer. He never had had any patience with Anthony's wild doings, and now they quarrelled perpetually. James refused to help him, as he had promised his father, and one day they had a fearful quarrel, in which Anthony killed James. James hadn't been married quite a year then. The murder was never proved. They had been heard quarrelling while the market was going on at Fairburn—a place about ten miles from here. The next morning, James was found lying dead in a ditch between this and Fairburn. They did not tell the wife he had not come home that night, as they were afraid it might frighten her in her state of health. But strangely enough—of course, it was only her fancy—she had heard, during the night, the sound of steps coming upstairs—heavy, weary steps. She thought it was her husband, and that, because he was late, he did not come in to see her. She had been very ill, and her mother was sleeping in the room with her. Her mother heard nothing; but in the morning the wife remarked on the lateness of the hour on which James returned, and also added that he walked as if he had been very tired. The mother went to see if he had come in after all. But the room was empty. An hour or two later they brought the news of his death. His son was born

the next day, and the poor mother died. They had not been able to keep the news from her. The shock killed her. Anthony was tried for the murder, but acquitted for want of evidence. He took to drinking more wildly than ever, and one day disappeared, and no one ever saw or heard of him again. His uncle looked after the mills till James's son, Stephen, was old enough to manage them himself. He married, and had two sons, but they both died; and at his death he left the mills and house to Brend, who was only a distant connection."

"But the ghosts?"

"Well, they do say that, ever since James Aston's death, those steps are still heard sometimes on the stairs; but nothing has ever been seen."

"Have you ever heard them?"

"I? No! But some people declare they have; and, it is a funny thing, they are always heard before some misfortune comes to the house. At least, so they say."

"I am sorry I heard them!"

"What nonsense! You heard Brend— Besides, the business is very flourishing, and Brend is in very good health, except his rheumatism; and, of course, he isn't as young as he was."

"Well, I don't think I could bring him misfortune, do you?" asked the girl, laughing, the superstitious fear vanishing. "I dare say I shall be a bother."

"You won't be a bother," said Miss Ross, looking at her a little oddly, and thinking how wonderfully pretty she was.

"But the other ghost?"

"Oh, that's not a pleasant story. It was a poor, miserable girl. All the more dreadful because James was supposed to be so good. The poor creature came here the night after he was murdered, and flung herself off that wooden bridge, just in front of the mills. They say that when James's feet are heard in the house, she is always to be seen on the bridge; and that she comes to try and meet him. It was a wild winter night, and the river was swollen, and her body was found two days later, a good distance down the bank. No one till then knew anything about it, and every one was dreadfully shocked. The mother came to Riverbridge the day she was found to look after her, as she had disappeared from home a few days before. The mother told everything; but she said the girl had always declared that James

had married her. They lived a long way from here. It seems as if she had come to look after James, and that then, for the first time, found out that he had a wife. That, and the fact of his murder, I suppose, happening all at once, turned her brain, and she drowned herself. Of course, the story of the marriage was ridiculous. If it had been true, she would have, according to the girl's mother, been married to James before he married his real wife."

"Then the last would not have been his wife at all?"

"No. And Stephen would not have inherited the property, for his father died without a will. But, of course, it was all a cock-and-bull story, got up between that poor, wretched girl and her mother. And James ought to have known better."

"Of course, if it had been true, Anthony Aston would have been able to claim the property instead of his nephew Stephen?"

"It was a good thing he couldn't. He was a good-for-nothing."

"I know an Anthony," said Daisy, with thoughtful irrelevance, while her eyes seemed to grow prettier with a kind of dreamy sweetness. "He was a friend of ours in Australia, and he has been staying in Germany during the last two years."

The change of conversation was rather a relief to Miss Ross, for she was beginning to remember that Brend could be very unpleasant if disobeyed, and it was a good thing Daisy's thoughts had drifted to another subject than the Bridge House ghosts. It was a gruesome idea, that of the drowned girl always returning to wait for the steps of her false lover; and as Daisy was so very fanciful she might have more frights if she dwelt too much on it.

#### CHAPTER VI.

DAISY GARTH had been nearly two months in Riverbridge. She had arrived in the beginning of December, and it was now the end of January.

Miss Ross performed her offices of chaperon and companion with kindly tact, and was always ready to fling herself in the breaches which occasionally opened between Brend Aston and his ward. For, sometimes, the girl, seized apparently with a mischievous provoking spirit, would attack him with a bright audacity, defying his authority, mocking at his remonstrances, and often treating him more like a troublesome boy than a grave, elderly guardian, to whom respect was due.

Aston, under these moods, always grew cold and stern, and Miss Ross, fearing he was angry, would do her best to make matters straight between them again. Whether she really succeeded to the satisfaction of the others, she did not know. She always succeeded to her own, for no open rupture ever came between the two.

It was after one of these little explosions between guardian and ward—when the flash and the retort were all on Daisy's side, for Aston himself was never anything but sternly laconic—that she told Daisy she really ought to apologise.

"You were worse than ever this morning. I know he felt it deeply. He drove past in the dog-cart half an hour ago; and I dare say he won't come home till all hours. After all, he is old enough to be your father, and if he doesn't wish you to go into those dirty houses, he knows best."

"It is such nonsense!"—impatiently, her eyes still bright from the very one-sided altercation she had had with her guardian at breakfast—"considering that I mean to devote my life to helping the poor. Anthony told me I was sure to be always bothered by people trying to prevent me. One good thing, I can do as I like when I am of age."

"You are always talking of this Mr. Anthony Melvin," said Miss Ross, curiously, looking up from the stocking she was mending, as she sat before the sitting-room fire. Daisy was standing at the window near the fireplace, gazing out with bright, vexed eyes into the street. She turned and looked at Miss Ross, and all the petulance had vanished.

"Oh, I am sure you would like him. He is so good and brave, and he always tried to make me patient, though"—with a recollection—"he used to get awfully impatient himself sometimes. He and I used to play together in Australia. Then I left Australia with father, and never heard anything more of him till he turned up in Leipzig two years ago. He remembered me at once when we met in the street. So did I him. Of course he came to see me; and he was very sorry when I had to come away."

"He would be more sorry if he could see me here in this dull little place," she thought, petulantly, and then her generous nature reasserted itself, and she felt remorseful. For everybody had been very kind to her.

"What was he doing in Leipzig?"

"Oh, studying."

"What is he studying?"

"All sorts of things—painting, music, philosophy, science. He's taken them all up by turns. He's dreadfully clever, you know."

"It is a pity he doesn't keep to one thing," with an attempt at moralising.

"But that wouldn't do. His real study is human nature," with a certain grand air, which was as deliciously pretty as all her other airs.

"Human nature! Is he going to make a living out of human nature?"

"He's not going to make a living at all. He's like me. He has enough money to live for others. He is going to be a—well, a sort of philanthropist, though we hate the word. Because we think all men and women, even the poorest and most degraded, are our brothers and sisters; and when we go to work among them, we are going as their brother and sister, not as superior beings, condescending to be kind to them!" with fine scorn, remembering a visit from one of the clergymen's wives of the town to a poor, sick woman, at which she had assisted.

Miss Ross was growing bewildered and rather alarmed.

"What do you mean?"

"Why! That we are going to devote our time, our education, our money, to help those who are so miserable. He is going back to Australia, to work in Sydney or Melbourne, and I shall go to London, I think. Father, you see, was English; and I think I couldn't find a place more in need of help than the East End. Anthony used to get me papers about it."

"And so—Anthony is going out to Australia again."

"Of course. It is his country, you know, and he must do his work there; though his family comes originally from England. But he was born there; so, of course, he ought to work there."

She spoke the last words in a lower and more reflective tone. It was as if she were recalling arguments which had once been used on this same subject, and which were quite conclusive.

"Of course he must," she said, after a pause, with a decision which rather startled Miss Ross, she having forgotten what Daisy had been saying in thoughts of her own.

That afternoon she declined to go out with Miss Ross, who wanted to pay a visit.

About four o'clock she went into the dining-room, and sat down by the fire, her face turned towards the glass doors leading into the garden. She stirred the fire into a brighter blaze, for, curiously enough, she who had once been as fearless as a school-boy had begun to have a great dislike to sitting alone in the dark in any of the rooms of Bridge House. She did not know when the feeling had first come over her, or what it was she feared. Perhaps it was the lingering effect of the fright she had had that night. Perhaps a shrinking dislike she had taken to the housekeeper was the cause.

It was dark outside in the garden, and she could see nothing through the glass doors.

There had been heavy rains lately. The ground was sodden, full of dead plants and mouldering vegetation, which left a faint, sickly odour in the air. The river was swollen, and its turbid waters, flecked with yellow foam, swirled past the house with monotonous, dreary voices, which depressed the girl with a sense of eerie gloom she could not throw off.

"It must be the rain," she thought.

Suddenly her eerie, unreasonable fears culminated in a passion of terror.

Looking in through the glass door, framed by the darkness behind and about, she fancied she saw a dreadful, white, despairing face.

With a faint cry, she sprang up, and ran towards the doors.

As she did so they opened, and Aston stepped into the room, a gust of rain, which had begun to fall again, following him in. He shut the door hastily.

Daisy stopped short, covered with amused vexation at her own folly; but very glad to see him.

"Do you know, I am really growing very silly, Mr. Aston!" she exclaimed. "Would you believe it, I was fancying all sorts of absurdities! I fancied there was a face watching me from the garden, and it gave me such a fright. And I rushed to see what it was. Wasn't it dreadfully silly? I am getting quite a coward."

"You ought not to be alone," he said, hastily; but there was a curious look in his eyes. "Where is Maria?"

"I ought to be ashamed of myself, you mean," she answered brightly. "Miss Ross went out to pay some visits. I did not go because I wanted to speak to you."

"To me!"

They had come back into the fire-light, and he saw that she was flushing. He drew back a step, and leant with his back against the chimney-piece, his face turned from the fire-light.

"I wanted to tell you how sorry I am that I spoke so crossly to you this morning at breakfast. I knew all along that it was wrong; but——" She stopped, and then went on courageously, "I know you are always right, even when I am most rebellious and tiresome." There was a strange glow in his eyes. "You are so much older——"

He turned his head away sharply, muttering something under his breath. It sounded like a malediction, and she stopped, her heart beating with the curious, nameless fear that sometimes touched her when in his presence. He saw the consternation. He laughed, though the sound was not quite natural.

"I'm a fool," he said, with grim sarcasm. "But when you speak of my age, in that tone, it seems as if we shall never be good friends; and I want your friendship as well as your——obedience."

She looked at him startled, indignant, her girlish pride conquering the fear. "Can old age and youth ever be friends?" he asked in that same half-bitter mockery. Then he saw that he had wounded her to the quick.

"Forgive me!" he exclaimed with a bitter-sweet smile. "I am a fool. Why should I exact more than you can give?"

"Oh, I am so sorry!" she cried, under her breath, moved by that smile and the self-reproach of the words. "I did not think my foolish conduct was giving you that idea! Oh, please believe me, I never imagined that it would make you think that I did not like you!"

"Do you mean to say——" he began, his voice vibrating; and then, with a violent effort, he checked himself. "Yes, I have been afraid sometimes that you did not——care for me," he went on, in a tone which sounded cold and constrained after the former eagerness. "And it hurt me to think that you looked on me only as a stern, disagreeable guardian," with a slight smile.

"Oh, but I never did," she said, laughing; but her pulses were beating quickly in response to some mental disturbance

aroused by his manner. "I knew you were always kind and good to me. Perhaps I have been just a little afraid of you sometimes," she added, truthfully; "and I don't like being afraid. And I believe, sometimes, it was just out of defiance that I made myself so disagreeable. But I promise you I will never be frightened any more," she said, with a bright smile, holding out her hand to his.

He took it, and held it for a second, looking down into her face with such strange, searching eyes, that her pulses began hurrying again.

"Thank you for that," he said, slowly. "See, I will tell you what I have never told to any one. My life is not so fortunate as people think it; but its abysses are my own; and I do not see why others should be compelled to look into their dreariness." He stopped, then went on: "I would not have told you, but sometimes I cannot help longing for human sympathy, and if you will help me I shall be grateful."

"How can I help you?"

"By trusting me, and treating me as your friend; by believing that I would do all in my life to make you happy."

He dropped her hands abruptly and turned away. She stood still for a moment after he had left her, bewildered, amazed, almost frightened. She did not understand his manner. But another did—Jane, as her master turned towards the screen, which shut off the other end of the room, vanished, a stealthy shadow. Neither had noticed her. She had come as they talked, always listening whenever they were together.

She hurried back to the kitchen; her face white and set.

"I knew it! It has come, as I said it would. He loves her—that pretty baby creature, who has done nothing for him, while I—— I hate her!"

Then she swore to herself that if that curse, uttered years before, had any power still to blast, it should stand between him and his new love.

That, if need be, it should take face and form in her person. That even to death she would bear out its fulfilment.

That night the fatal feet—which heralded death and dishonour to the house—were again heard passing up the staircase.

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